

Good morning,

I'd like to thank [name of school] and the Wappingers School District for inviting us.

We gather at events like this to honor not just recent generations of veterans but every man and woman who has honorably served since the American Revolution. Even with that impressive history, Veterans Day 2018 is especially significant.

It was one hundred years ago – at 11 am on 11/11 that's November 11, 1918- when the armistice began which ended World War I. It was a conflict so bloody and horrific that many optimistically referred to it as the “War to end all wars.” Sadly it wasn't.

Our Armed Forces are full of examples of veterans who have overcome tremendous barriers to continue serving. One such hero is Navy Chief Personnel Specialist Raina Hockenberry. Shot five times while serving in Kabul, Afghanistan, she is fortunate to have survived. In 2018, just four years after the brutal attack by a cowardly terrorist, Raina won eight gold medals and set four records in rowing, powerlifting, cycling and swimming at the Warrior Games in Colorado Springs.

Hockenberry explained why she decided to remain in the Navy, even after she was wounded.

I quote

“I was severely injured to the point where a medical retirement made sense but I can't imagine not serving in the military,” “It's all part of who we are, and my

fellow brothers and sisters in the military, we all believe in what we do. And I could not imagine not standing with them.” – Unquote.

America is fortunate to have had millions of brave men and women stand for freedom since our country's founding. We owe it to them all to ensure that their service and sacrifice is always remembered.

20.4 million Living veterans in the United States representing less than 10 percent of the population

7 Percent of U.S. adults who are veterans, down from 18 percent in 1980

9 Percent of living veterans who are women, projected to increase to 18 percent by 2045

Again, I'd like to thank you for inviting us, have a great day, make your parents proud and God Bless the United States of America.